

include random access memory, tape or magnetic disk storage devices. With respect to the method described above, ads that have been pooled might be stored for placement for extended periods of time, which is readily accomplished using any appropriate disk storage media 218.

Before or after advertisements are fully collected, access to a subscriber data file is accomplished by accessing a storage device such as RAM or disk storage 218 where such subscriber profile data (demographic data) is kept, and which comprises a computer readable medium containing instructions to carry out the foregoing method. Thereafter, the method steps described above are accomplished via the software

programmed into the publisher's computer 202. After the ads for which there is space available have been placed, the assembled publication can be sent via the Internet 206 through an appropriate interface (dial up modem, Ethernet or other mechanism) 204 to the Internet 206 for delivery to the subscriber's computer 220, which of course is also capable of being coupled to the Internet 206 through an appropriate transmission media 221 (and interface).

By using the foregoing method and apparatus, on-line publications which generally have only limited advertising space, can help maximize the revenue that such advertising space can generate. When asking advertisers to pay premium prices for space in an on-line publication, the publisher can represent to the prospective advertisers that placed ads are targeted to selected subscribers, which the advertisers can select according to generic descriptors in the subscribers data files.

I claim:

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1. A method of placing advertising in an on-line publication comprising the steps of:

obtaining a first offer to place a first advertisement in said on-line publication;

obtaining a second offer to place a second advertisement in said on-line publication;

selecting, from said first offer and said second offer, the greatest offer;

identifying at least one subscriber to which said on-line publication, with said advertisement corresponding to the greatest offer, is to be sent according to demographic data for said subscriber;

placing in said on-line publication, the advertisement corresponding to the greatest offer.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said publication is a publication distributed for publication using the Internet.

3. The method of claim 1 further including the step of transmitting the on-line publication to an Internet service provider for distribution.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of said first and second offers are for a determinable sum.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said publication is an electronically distributed publication comprised of information obtained from a plurality of sources.

6. The method of claim 1 further including the steps of:

obtaining a first advertisement to place in said publication;

obtaining a second advertisement to place in said publication.

7. The method of claim 1 further including the steps of:

determining whether an advertisement selected for publication has been previously placed;

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placing said advertisement selected publication again, if an advertiser's ad placement criteria has not been satisfied.

8. The method of claim 1 further including the step of reading subscriber demographic data to identify subscribers to whom said on-line publication is to be delivered.
9. The method of claim 1 further including the step of selecting content information based upon subscriber demographic data.
10. A method of distributing an on-line publication having advertising space into which advertising material is to be placed, said method comprised of the steps of:
- receiving a publication into which advertising material has been placed for publication using a predetermined methodology;
- distributing said publication via a data network to at least one predetermined subscriber.
11. The method of claim 10 wherein said predetermined methodology includes an automated advertising space auction.
12. The method of claim 10 wherein said steps are performed by an Internet service provider.
13. A method of placing advertising from a plurality of advertisers in a publication to be delivered to predetermined subscribers of said publication, said method comprising:
- identifying, for at least one predetermined subscriber to said publication, first and second advertisements from first and second prospective advertisers that comports with subscriber profile information stored in at least one data file;

obtaining a first offering price to place said first advertisement in said publication;

obtaining a second offering price to place said second advertisement in said publication;

placing in said publication, at least one of said first and second advertisements, for the corresponding prospective advertiser that offers the greater price of said first and second prices.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said subscriber profile information includes demographic data of a subscriber to said publication.

15. The method of claim 13 comprised of the step of:  
updating said subscriber profile information prior to identifying advertising that comports with said subscriber profile information.

16. The method of claim 13 further including the steps of: determining content information to be compiled and delivered to a subscriber based upon subscriber profile information.

17. The method of claim 13 further including the step of placing in said publication, at least one of said first and second advertisements, for the advertiser offering the greater price of said first and second prices, but at the lower of said first and second prices.

18. The method of claim 13 wherein at least one of said first and second prices is a maximum price that the respective advertiser is willing to pay to deliver to an intended recipient of the advertising.

19. The method of claim 13 wherein said publication is an electronic publication.

20. The method of claim 13 further including the step of sizing said first or said second advertisement to fit within an available advertising space.

21. The method of claim 13 wherein said publication is a publication comprised of information in the form of electronic data collected from a plurality of electronic data sources via a data network.

22. The method of claim 13 further including the step of sizing content information in said publication to adjust the amount of advertising space available.

23. The method of claim 13 wherein said publication is the Hewlett-Packard Instant Delivery<sup>TM</sup> service.

24. The method of claim 13 wherein said subscriber profile information determines at least in part, the content of said publication on a subscriber-by-subscriber basis.

25. The method of claim 13 wherein said step of obtaining a first maximum price that a first advertiser is willing to pay to place said first advertisement in said publication is further comprised of the step of: determining a maximum price that said first advertiser is willing to pay to place said first advertisement for delivery to said first advertisement to predetermined subscribers of said publication.

26. The method of claim 13 wherein said step of obtaining a first maximum price that a second advertiser is willing to pay to place said second advertisement in said publication is further comprised of the step of: determining a maximum price that said second advertiser is willing to pay to place said first advertisement for delivery to said second advertisement to predetermined distributees of said publication.

27. A method of placing advertising from a plurality of advertisers in a publication to be delivered to a plurality of predetermined subscribers of said publication, said method comprising:

providing to at least one prospective advertiser, demographic data for at least one subscriber to said publication;

obtaining from said at least one advertiser, a first advertisement for placement in said publication, and which is selected at least in part using said demographic data for said at least one subscriber;

obtaining a first offering price to place said first advertisement in said publication;

obtaining a second offering price to place a second advertisement in said publication;

placing in said publication, at least one of said first and second advertisements, for the advertiser offering the greater price of said first and second prices.

28. The method of claim 27 comprised of the step of:

updating said demographic data prior to providing said demographic data.

29. The method of claim 27 further including the steps of: determining content information to be compiled and delivered to a subscriber based upon said demographic data.

30. The method of claim 27 wherein said publication is an electronic publication distributed at least in part via the Internet.

31. The method of claim 27 further including the step of sizing said first or said second advertisement to fit within an available advertising space.

32. The method of claim 27 wherein said publication is a publication comprised of information in the form of electronic data collected from a plurality of electronic data sources via the Internet.

33. The method of claim 27 further including the step of sizing content information in said publication to adjust the amount of advertising space available.
- 5 34. The method of claim 27 wherein said publication is the Hewlett-Packard Instant Delivery™ service.
35. The method of claim 27 wherein said demographic data determines at least in part, the content of said publication on a subscriber-by-subscriber basis.
- 10 36. An apparatus to determine which advertising from a plurality of advertisers is to be placed in an on-line publication having limited advertising space to be delivered to predetermined subscribers to said publication, said apparatus comprising:
- 15 first computer identifying, advertisements that comport with subscriber profile information for at least one predetermined subscribers to said publication;
- an data storage device coupled to said first computer wherein subscriber profile information is stored;
- 20 an interface coupling said data network to said first computer, enabling the exchange of data between advertisers and said first computer and between subscribers to said publication and said first computer.
37. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for
- 25 performing steps for information storage and retrieval of information that comprises the steps of:
- identifying, from a plurality of advertisements of said plurality of advertisers, first and second advertisements that comport with subscriber profile information for at least one predetermined subscribers to said
- 30 publication;
- obtaining a first price that a first advertiser will pay to place said first advertisement in said publication;

obtaining a second price that a second advertiser will pay to place said second advertisement in said publication;

placing in said publication, for the advertiser offering the greater price of said first and second prices, at least one of said first and second advertisements, according to the criteria that said first and second prices are unequal.

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